

31st Annual Write Women Back into History Essay contest

Date of Awards ceremony: Thursday, March 12th, 2015

What:

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, the Iowa Department of Education, and the State Historical Society of Iowa invite Iowa's youth to gain a deeper and more relevant appreciation of women's roles in history and celebrate March as Women's History Month by participating in the *Write Women Back into History* Essay Contest.

Who:

The contest is open to any sixth- through ninth-grade student, female or male, in Iowa. Each student may submit only one essay.

When:

Essays and entry forms must be **e-mailed** to women@iowa.gov no later than **Friday, January 23rd, 2015**.

Why:

Cash prizes will be awarded to the first-, second-, and third-place winner in each of the 6-7th grade and 8-9th grade divisions (first place: \$100; second place: \$75, and third place: \$50). Winners will be honored in a ceremony at the State Historical Building on March 12th, 2015. Winners, their hometown media, and *The Des Moines Register* will be notified prior to the ceremony (March 2015). All winners and finalists will receive a certificate of participation signed by the governor.

The best essays on women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) will receive book and cash prizes. Women have always made significant contributions to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, but historically those contributions have not been recognized as publicly as those of men. The Program for Women in Science and Engineering at Iowa State University and the Women in Science and Engineering Program at the University of Iowa will award book and cash prizes to the best essays that focus on a woman in science, technology, engineering and math. All other contest rules apply.

How

Please read the theme information on this page and see the following page for entry guidelines and judging criteria.

2015 Theme

Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives

Students are encouraged to choose a woman, preferably from Iowa, from any historical period, past or present, and write about the accomplishments of her life and how she has made a difference to the student and to society. Although Iowa women are preferred and encouraged, the subject of the essay may be a woman from another state or another country.

Entry Format and Criteria for Judging

Entries should be checked for accuracy and use of standard English procedures, such as correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Essays should be proofread for errors and spellchecked. Essays should make use of evidence and include specific examples as to why the woman should be written into history and how she is important to others and the student. Essays should exhibit effective use of descriptive language, voice and originality. Citing of all sources, whether primary or secondary, is mandatory. Essays must adhere to all entry format rules.

Before submitting your entry, please make sure it fits the following guidelines. It should:

- Be double-spaced in an easy to read font
- Be saved as a PDF, Microsoft Word document (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Include no more than **1,000 words** (not including the source list)
- Include a source list

A student's own thoughts on the significance of the woman's contributions are important.

Essays should identify the following:

- Why the woman should be written into history. (What meaningful contributions has she made to her community, the state, nation, or world?)
- Why she is important to the student. Students should consider what people would learn about us from this essay 50 years from now.

A successful essay will discuss why the student researched, read about, interviewed, and/or found the subject to be a role model; it should not merely be a biographical sketch.

Judges will review the essays for the following:

- **Student awareness:** Does the student effectively portray this woman's relevance in ordinary or extraordinary historical circumstances? Has the student convinced readers of this point? (Explanation of why the woman should be written into history and how she is important to others and the student.) Is it more than a biographical sketch?
- **Voice and originality:** Does the essay flow and make sense? How has the student used original words and phrases to tell the story? Is the student's voice apparent? Is the essay original in voice or spirit?
- **Mechanics:** Does the student use correct grammar, punctuation, spelling? Are sources cited? (Accuracy and use of standard English procedures: correct punctuation, spelling, grammar)
- Adherence to all entry format rules

Judging: Winning essays will be chosen by a panel composed of Iowa authors, historians, activists, and representatives of the sponsoring agencies.

Submit the essay with a completed entry form to women@iowa.gov. All essays become property of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women and will not be returned.

For more information: Contact Kristen Corey; telephone: 515/281-4470 or e-mail: women@iowa.gov.